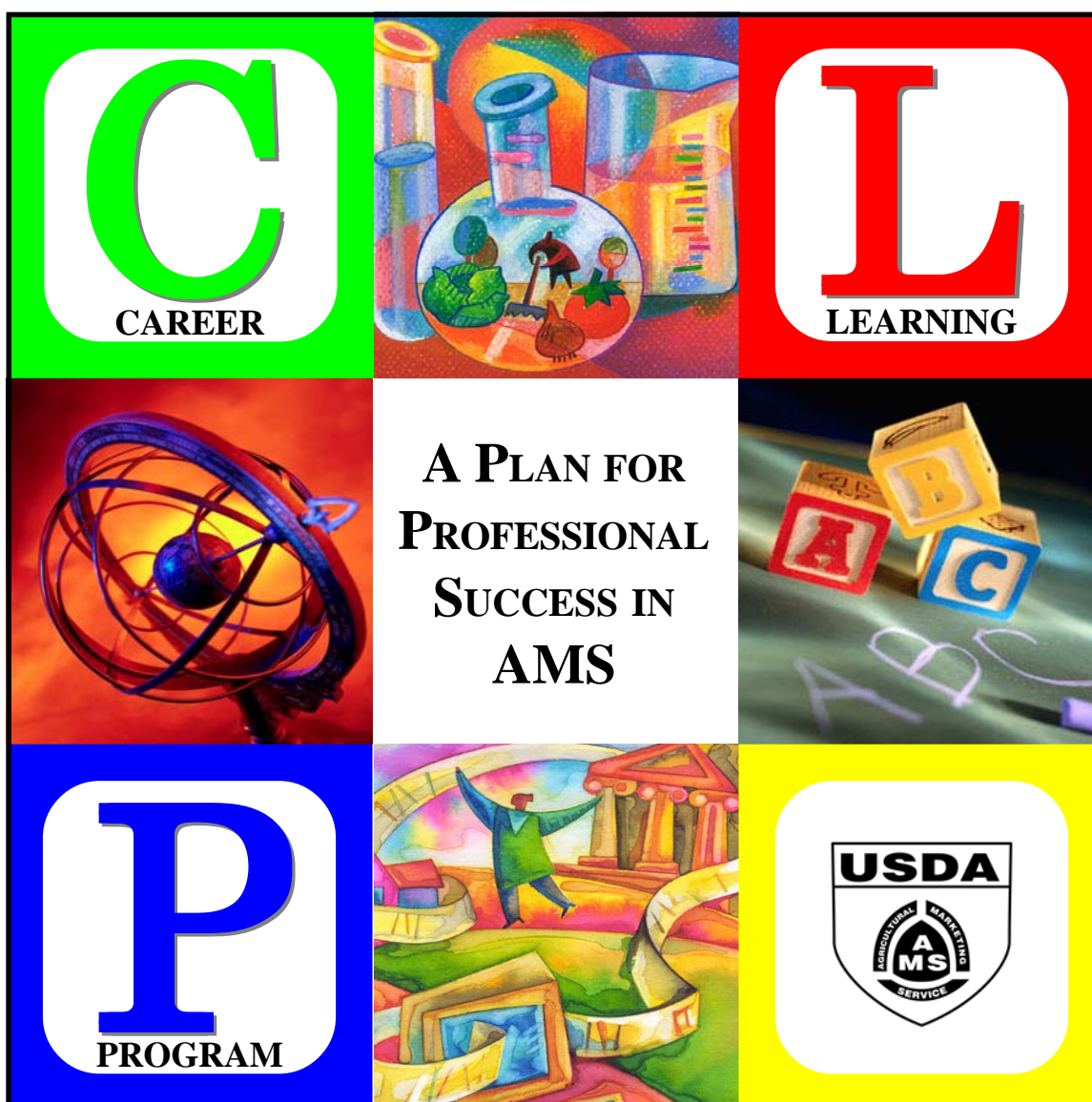


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# AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SERVICE CAREER LEARNING PROGRAM

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# AMS CAREER LEARNING PROGRAM – INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) Career Learning Program – a plan for professional success in AMS. Whether you are considering employment with AMS, have joined us early in your public service career or have made a mid-career change, you will find that AMS is a great place to grow your career and to make a significant contribution to public service. In order to assist you to develop your road map along which you can steer your career and professional development, we have developed this document for your use.

AMS values our employees and is committed to helping all employees develop their career and achieve the competencies (skill and abilities) necessary for success. Our goal is to provide learning opportunities for our employees to accomplish the AMS mission, enhance employee competencies and career growth, develop leaders, demonstrate our commitment to lifelong learning, and serve the need to assure that the Agency has a diverse group of high-performing, well prepared individuals with a vision for the Agency's future and a broad understanding of its mission.

In this plan you will find non-technical competencies that have been identified as critical for success in AMS. The plan lists each competency, and describes performance indicators at the entry through executive levels. It also lists developmental opportunities - both formal training and other strategies - you may wish to consider as you create your plan to develop the skills to meet each competency. The developmental activities suggested should not be considered as "final," but rather as suggestions.

We encourage you to use this guide as a tool to plan your development. AMS requires each employee to create an Individual Development Plan (IDP) in consultation with their supervisors. Some guidelines for creating your IDP are included; you should discuss this with your supervisor. Of course, the AMS Training Institute is always a resource and will be delighted to offer advice or assistance. AMSTI can be reached at (202) 690-3018, or at: [AMSTI@usda.gov](mailto:AMSTI@usda.gov).

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# BASIC COMPETENCIES

AMS CORE COMPETENCIES	Entry GS 5-8	Full Performance GS 9-11	Expert GS 12-13	Mastery GS 14-15	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES
<b>Basic Competencies</b>  - Organizational Awareness - Mission - Function - Internal/External Awareness - Ethics  "Knows the organization's mission and functions and is well grounded in policies, rules, and regulations of the organization."  "Identifies the internal and external forces that impact the work of the organization. Approaches each problem situation with a clear perception of organizational and political reality, recognizes the impact of alternative courses of action."  "Is committed to providing trustworthy, ethical, uniform, and consistent services to our customers and to be truthful, forthcoming and transparent in our interactions with others."	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Understands the agency's mission in the context of its legislative mandates and priorities.	<b>Formal Training:</b>  New Employee Orientation (AMSTI) College Courses in Public Policy; Government, etc.  <b>Other Strategies:</b>  - Read & Discuss with your supervisor Agency authorizing legislation; mission statements, civil rights statements, and ethics materials.  - Review New Employee Orientation checklist with your supervisor.  - Participate in program sponsored meetings and seminars.  - Visit the AMS internet site: <a href="http://www.ams.usda.gov">www.ams.usda.gov</a> (check out: Agencies & Offices; USDA Ethics; Office of Civil Rights).  - Visit the APHIS internet site: <a href="http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/new_employee_orientation.html">www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/new_employee_orientation.html</a>  - Review the AMS Strategic Plan, and related Human Capital Plans at <a href="http://insideams.ams.usda.gov/">http://insideams.ams.usda.gov/</a>  - Complete USDA on-line ethics training  - Read "Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch" US Office of Government Ethics, October 2002  - Read <b>Public Management Strategies</b> by Bozeman and Straussman, Jossey-Bass Public Administration Series.
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Maintains an awareness of agency's laws, regulations, policies, procedures, trends and developments.	
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Understands and makes effective use of principles and processes for resource allocation, acquisition, management and business practices.	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Develops knowledge of the agency's structure, mission, function and major programs, and understands how the agency is organized to achieve its mission.	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Reviews and makes recommendations for improvements in policy, procedure or regulations affecting area of responsibility.	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Models and encourages high standards of honesty, integrity, trust, openness, and respect for others.	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Recognizes the value of individual differences in the organization and promotes acceptance of diverse points of view.	

# CONFLICT MANAGEMENT & INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

AMS CORE COMPETENCIES	Entry GS 5-8	Full Performance GS 9-11	Expert GS 12-13	Mastery GS 14-15	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES
<b>Conflict Management &amp; Interpersonal Skills</b>  "Identifies and takes steps to prevent potential situations that could result in unpleasant confrontations. Manages and resolves conflicts and disagreements in a positive and constructive manner."  "Is able to build and maintain effective working relationships based on principles of sensitivity, respect and fairness."	☑	☑	☑	☑	Attempts to resolve conflict in a constructive manner by promptly identifying conflict and taking appropriate steps to find a remedy.	<b>Formal Training:</b>  - Conflict Management & Communication Skills (AMSTI) - BOSS I & II (AMSTI) - People Side of Supervision (AMSTI) - Classes in negotiation, conflict management, anger management - Participate in program-sponsored training - College courses in Psychology  <b>(For Supervisors)</b> - BOSS I and II (AMSTI) - People Side of Supervision (AMSTI) - Work Side of Supervision (AMSTI) - Professional Skills and Tools (AMSTI) - Online Training (AMSTI/AgLearn) <a href="http://www.ams.usda.gov/training">http://www.ams.usda.gov/training</a>  <b>Other Strategies:</b>  - When you are working with others, take note of their reactions to what you say and do. When things are going well, think about what you did. When you sense tension, think about what you said or did immediately prior to the situation becoming tense or uncomfortable, and what you could have done differently.  - Observe others' interpersonal styles. Note particularly effective and ineffective techniques for working with others. Discuss this with a trusted co-worker or supervisor, and ask for feedback on your use of them. Make a conscious effort to adopt effective techniques and avoid ineffective ones. Ask for more feedback.  - Identify a mentor. Observe how they work with others and ask for tips on how to be successful.  - When you are working with others, "put yourself in their shoes" and view the situation from their perspective. Think about the problems you would face and what you would need to accomplish their goals.  - Consult with the AMS Alternative Resolution Service: Telephone: 202-690-3017, or Toll Free: 866-227-0328, or <a href="http://www.ams.usda.gov/ar">www.ams.usda.gov/ar</a> or <a href="mailto:AMS-AR@USDA.Gov">AMS-AR@USDA.Gov</a>  - Read <b>Getting to Yes</b> , by Fisher and Ury of the Harvard Negotiation Project
		☑	☑	☑	Seeks to effectively resolve formal and informal complaints from employees.	
			☑	☑	Identifies and initiates support strategies and programs to prevent and manage conflict.	

# CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION

AMS CORE COMPETENCIES	Entry GS 5-8	Full Performance GS 9-11	Expert GS 12-13	Mastery GS 14-15	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES
<b>Creativity and Innovation</b>  "Develops new insights into situations and applies innovative solutions to make organizational improvements; creates a work environment that encourages creative thinking and innovation; designs and implements new or cutting-edge programs or processes."		☑	☑	☑	Develops innovative solutions and applies new insights and ideas to improve organizational performance.	<b>Formal Training:</b>  <b>Conflict Management &amp; -</b> - College Courses in Thinking Styles - Courses in Marketing - Management Development Courses - Professional Skills & Tools (AMSTI) - Participate in Program meetings and workshops  <b>Other Strategies:</b>  - Plan with supervisor for details, cross training, or rotational assignments.  - Volunteer to work on projects  - Read <i><b>What A Great Idea!</b></i> , and incorporate ideas into daily projects.  - Read books and articles on organizational change.  - Attend industry-related meetings and read industry journals to see trends.  - Read <i><b>Kaizen</b></i> , by Masaaki Imai, the Kaizen Institute.
		☑	☑	☑	Contributes to creating an environment where efforts to promote creativity and innovation are encouraged and recognized.	
			☑	☑	Identifies opportunities to develop new products and services.	

# CUSTOMER SERVICE

AMS CORE COMPETENCIES	Entry GS 5-8	Full Performance GS 9-11	Expert GS 12-13	Mastery GS 14-15	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES
<b>Customer Service</b>  "Meets the technical needs of our customers within the guidelines established for each agency program while attending to the need for knowledgeable, accurate, and timely service."	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Provides prompt, accurate and reliable services to external customers and stakeholders.	<b>Formal Training:</b>  - Communication & Customer Service Self-Study Program (AMSTI) - New Employee Orientation, BOSS I and BOSS II (AMSTI) - Participate in program workshops and meetings - Customer Service professional development seminars and workshops- - Online Training (AMSTI/AgLearn) <a href="http://www.ams.usda.gov/training">http://www.ams.usda.gov/training</a>  <b>Other Strategies:</b>  - Discuss customer service standards with your supervisor and co-workers.  - Ask a peer or supervisor who is known for great customer service to accompany you to a difficult encounter. Ask for feedback regarding how you handled the situation.  - Review AMS and your Program documentation discussing interactions and roles with industry.  - Read <b><i>Built to Last</i></b> , by Colins and Porras, Harper Business.
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Performs assigned duties in a professional manner.	
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Establishes customized feedback and measurement systems to meet customer expectations and requirements.	
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Identifies and anticipates the needs and expectations of customers and stakeholders and recommends modifications in the development and delivery of products and services when appropriate.	



# STRESS MANAGEMENT

AMS CORE COMPETENCIES	Entry GS 5-8	Full Performance GS 9-11	Expert GS 12-13	Mastery GS 14-15	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES
<b>Stress Management</b>  "Exhibits the ability to function effectively under pressure from constrained deadlines, external pressures, challenging work conditions, and mutually competing demands for adequate information and timely action."	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Demonstrates the ability to perform duties and responsibilities effectively under time pressure and competing demands.	<b>Formal Training:</b>  - New Employee Orientation (AMSTI) - Supervisory Training (AMSTI) - Courses, seminars and workshops in stress management - offered by local hospitals, community colleges and other local education and professional development organizations - Courses in planning and organizing - Courses in time management - Online Training (AMST/AgLearn) <a href="http://www.ams.usda.gov/training">http://www.ams.usda.gov/training</a>  <b>Other Strategies:</b>  - Make a list of stressors on and off the job. Plan ways to reduce them  - Read <b>First Things First</b> , by Covey, Franklin Covey Co.  - Know the resources available through the <i>AMS Work Life Program</i> on the AMS Intranet web site.
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Assists other staff members to develop strategies to manage time stress and job stress in a productive manner.	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Demonstrates the ability to maintain focus while managing multiple tasks, functions, and responsibilities.	

# INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

AMS CORE COMPETENCIES	Entry GS 5-8	Full Performance GS 9-11	Expert GS 12-13	Mastery GS 14-15	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES
<b>Information Technology</b>  "Has knowledge of principles, methods and techniques of information technology. Uses computers and computer applications to analyze and communicate information in the appropriate manner."	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Demonstrates and maintains knowledge of day to day agency technology applications and security procedures.	<b>Formal Training:</b> - Online Training (AMSTVAgLearn) <a href="http://www.ams.usda.gov/training">http://www.ams.usda.gov/training</a> - Basic computer courses - Courses in software applications used by your program - Seminars and workshops offered by your program.  <b>Other Strategies:</b> - Attend/participate in meetings, workshops and briefings concerning information technology. - Experiment with standard packages. - Ask others for help or coaching on various software packages. - Read journals about technology.
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Efficiently retrieves, uses and analyzes information pertinent to work activities.	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Understands agency regulations concerning the appropriate use of and access to technology applications.	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Develops and evaluates efficient and cost-effective approaches to integrate technology into the workplace and to improve program effectiveness.	

# PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT/HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

AMS CORE COMPETENCIES	Entry GS 5-8	Full Performance GS 9-11	Expert GS 12-13	Mastery GS 14-15	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES
<b>Performance Management / Human Resource Management</b>  "Is able to plan and organize assigned duties by setting goals, monitoring progress and reporting and evaluating accomplishments."  "Is well versed in specific aspects of human capital resource management including, hiring, performance measures, performance review and employee relations and can deliver these services in a professional and understandable manner."	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Accepts responsibility for assigned duties and develops strategies to effectively meet short term and long term goals.	<b>Formal Training:</b>  - New Employee Orientation (AMSTI) - Seminars and workshops offered by your program. - Conflict Management & Communication Skills (AMSTI) - BOSS I & II (AMSTI) - People Side & Work Side of Supervision (AMSTI) - Seminars & Workshops in supervision - College courses and workshops in management - Online Training (AMST/AgLearn) <a href="http://www.ams.usda.gov/training">http://www.ams.usda.gov/training</a>  <b>Other Strategies:</b>  - Review M&RP Human Resources web page, including the Supervisor's Desk Guide at : <a href="http://aphis.usda.gov/mrpbbs/hr.htm">http://aphis.usda.gov/mrpbbs/hr.htm</a>  - Review AMS Human Capital Plan and related plans (workforce plan, strategic plan, etc.) at: <a href="http://insideams.ams.usda.gov/">http://insideams.ams.usda.gov/</a>  - Read <b>Analyzing Performance Problems</b> , by Mager and Pipie, Pitman Learning
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Identifies and communicates performance expectations and evaluates employee performance in a timely and concise manner.	
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Establishes realistic goals for employee performance; equips employees with authority to complete work assignments, and monitors progress.	
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Makes recommendations for programs to recruit and retain competent staff, to build employee morale and to promote effective job performance.	

# ORAL COMMUNICATION

AMS CORE COMPETENCIES	Entry GS 5-8	Full Performance GS 9-11	Expert GS 12-13	Mastery GS 14-15	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES
<b>Oral Communication</b>  "Has ability to communicate ideas effectively and persuasively. Has ability to listen and process information in an efficient and productive manner."	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Expresses ideas orally in a clear, concise, organized and convincing manner, using proper grammar, vocabulary and syntax.	<b>Formal Training:</b>  - Basic communication skills workshops and seminars - Briefings and presentations workshops and courses - Conflict Management & Communication Skills (AMSTI) - BOSS I & II (AMSTI) - Facilitator training - College and professional development English and writing courses - Toastmasters  <b>Other Strategies:</b>  - Identify someone you feel is a good communicator. Identify what makes them good, and develop/practice those skills.
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Listens effectively, communicates understanding and encourages an open exchange of ideas.	
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Prepares and orally presents findings and recommendations to officials and stakeholders that are convincing and effective.	
						- Jot down what you plan to say before communicating with someone. Ensure that your thoughts are organized and cover all the necessary information.  - Actively participate in meetings to get comfortable speaking in group settings. Ask a trusted colleague for feedback.  - Volunteer to serve as a facilitator in a meeting. Ask for participants' feedback on your facilitation and communication skills.  - Make a videotape of a presentation. Watch it with a good speaker and discuss what you did well and what you can do even better in future presentations.  - Read <b>Crucial Conversations</b> , by Patterson, Grannny, McMillan, Switzler

# WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

AMS CORE COMPETENCIES	Entry GS 5-8	Full Performance GS 9-11	Expert GS 12-13	Mastery GS 14-15	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES
<b>Written Communication</b>  "Possesses the ability to communicate written ideas, reports, and findings effectively and persuasively."	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Writes in a clear, concise, organized and effective manner, with appropriate use of grammar and vocabulary.	<b>Formal Training:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Practical English &amp; the Command of Words (AMSTI)</li> <li>- Online Training (AMSTI/AgLearn) <a href="http://www.ams.usda.gov/training">http://www.ams.usda.gov/training</a></li> <li>- Effective writing courses and seminars</li> <li>- "Plain English" writing courses</li> <li>- Professional Skills and Tools (AMSTI)</li> <li>- Grammar workshops and tutorials</li> <li>- Classes in briefing techniques</li> <li>- Program sponsored training</li> </ul> <b>Other Strategies:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review program policy and procedure manuals for style requirements.</li> <li>- Keep examples of well-written documents for reference. Refer to them regularly.</li> <li>- Revisit your writing after some time away and have another person give you feedback.</li> <li>- Review changes made to your writing by your manager. Discuss reasons for changes. Identify common errors and make effort to eliminate them.</li> <li>- Take a second and third look at e-mail before sending it.</li> <li>- Use spell-check and grammar check. Run a reader difficulty check to evaluate the clarity of your message.</li> </ul>
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Effectively reviews the writings of others in a productive and useful manner.	
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Analyzes complex data and reports findings in an effective manner to stakeholders.	

# STRATEGIC PLANNING AND VISION

AMS CORE COMPETENCIES	Entry GS 5-8	Full Performance GS 9-11	Expert GS 12-13	Mastery GS 14-15	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES
<b>Strategic Planning and Vision</b>  "Is able to articulate and to guide agency activities based on a clearly defined vision and mission. Envisions a long-term view and initiates organizational change for the future; builds the vision with others."			☑	☑	Demonstrates an understanding of the use and application of strategic planning processes in order to build a shared vision for the future.	<b>Formal Training:</b>  - USDA Graduate School classes:  Strategic Planning for Government Organizations; Leading Change; Workforce Analysis & Planning.  <b>Other Strategies:</b>  - Review the <i>AMS Strategic Plan</i> at:  <a href="http://www.insideams.ams.usda.gov">www.insideams.ams.usda.gov</a>  - Read the article <b>Public Sector Values: The Means to an End</b> , by Linder & Wheeler. April 2005. <a href="http://www.accenture.com">www.accenture.com</a>  - Read the book <b>Thinking for a Change</b> , by John C. Maxwell. Demonstrate openness to new ideas by asking for opinions of staff when establishing work objectives.
			☑	☑	Thinks strategically and cooperatively with others in order to define, establish, and set priorities, objectives and goals that are aligned with the vision and mission of the Agency.	
			☑	☑	Applies a long term perspective when analyzing policies or making recommendations for changes in procedures or regulations.	
			☑	☑	Recommends and/or supports initiatives to improve and to strengthen organizational performance.	

# LEADERSHIP: LEADING SELF AND OTHERS, TEAM BUILDING, ACCOUNTABILITY

AMS CORE COMPETENCIES	Entry GS 5-8	Full Performance GS 9-11	Expert GS 12-13	Mastery GS 14-15	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES
<b>Leadership: Leading Self and Others Team Building Accountability</b>  "Inspires, guides and motivates others towards accomplishing goals that are aligned with the mission and values of the agency. "  "Develops, sustains and models cooperative working relationships.  "Develops leadership in others. Creates an environment that furthers employee retention."  "Assures that effective controls are developed and maintained to ensure the integrity of the organization. Holds self and others accountable for rules and responsibilities."	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Demonstrates the ability to model and encourage others to support the mission and values of the agency in day to day activities.	<b>Formal Training:</b>  - Complete a course on "Emotional Intelligence and Leadership" - Complete course offered by OPM in leadership, collaboration, etc. <a href="http://www.leadership.opm.gov">www.leadership.opm.gov</a> - Become familiar with OPM Leadership Development Competencies and draft a 3-year IDP with your supervisor. - Participate in leadership development courses offered through your Program or AMSTI.  <b>Other Strategies:</b>  - Review the USDA and AMS Strategic and Human Capital Plan.  - Review the AMS Values Statement.  - Read the book <i>The Courageous Follower</i> , by Ira Chaleff.  - Read the book <i>Primal Leadership: Learning to Lead with Emotional Intelligence</i> , by Daniel Goleman.  - Complete a self-assessment of your leadership decision-making and problem solving skills (e.g., Yale Assessment of Thinking, Situational Leadership, etc.).  - Discuss with your supervisors volunteering for work assignments.  - Read articles about delegation, consider delegating tasks you have been completing.  - Look for opportunities for staff to become involved in Agency-wide committees.  - Read the article "What Great Managers Do." <a href="http://harvardbusinessonline.hbsp.harvard.edu">Harvard Business Review</a> March 2005 <a href="http://harvardbusinessonline.hbsp.harvard.edu">http://harvardbusinessonline.hbsp.harvard.edu</a>
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Models integrity and character, promotes ethical practices in the workplace.	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Uses power and authority appropriately to achieve goals or to accomplish leadership duties.	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Makes recommendations or supports initiatives to improve the performance of the agency and services to stakeholders.	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Inspires others to carry out assigned work.	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Fosters commitment, instills mutual trust and confidence in the workplace.	
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Accepts and responds to opportunities to coach, mentor, guide, and reward employees.	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Accepts responsibility for actions; encourages others to take ownership of work, products and services.	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Monitors programs and activities and takes corrective actions when needed.	
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Makes recommendations or supports programs to ensure that effective measures of control and reporting are in place.	

# SELF DEVELOPMENT

AMS CORE COMPETENCIES	Entry GS 5-8	Full Performance GS 9-11	Expert GS 12-13	Mastery GS 14-15	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	DEVELOPMENTAL ACTIVITIES
<b>Self Development</b>  "Is committed to pursuing options for professional development based on carefully designed learning and development plans."	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Accepts and uses feedback from others concerning technical and non-technical job performance.	<b>Formal Training:</b>  - Explore courses offered through Aglearn and develop your Individual Development Plan  <b>Other Strategies:</b>  - Take a 360-degree survey and get feedback from your supervisor, peers, and others.  - Make an Individual Development Plan for your development. Discuss it with your supervisor.  - Discuss your professional development goals and plans with successful peers and your supervisors. Ask for feedback.  - Following your performance appraisal establish 1 - 2 new goals to strengthen your performance and acquire new knowledge.  - Discuss with your supervisor opportunities to serve on committees.
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Actively pursues opportunities to learn new skills or to strengthen existing abilities.	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Encourages others to pursue career and professional development opportunities.	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Makes recommendations or supports initiatives to provide and promote professional and career development opportunities that are aligned with the Agency's mission and values.	



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## RESOURCES AND REFERENCE

### **AMSTI:**

- For those courses listed as “AMSTI”, information can be found at:

<http://www.ams.usda.gov/training>

- For those activities listed as “on-line”, you may log into the AMSTI home page, and find information about how to access AgLearn, USDA’s electronic learning environment. You will need an ID, and you will need to e-authenticate. Information and directions on how to complete the process are listed on the AMSTI home page.

### **OPM:**

- Reference is made to Management Courses and the OPM Leadership Development Competencies. These can be located at:

<http://www.leadership.opm.gov/index.cfm>

- This link will give you an overview of the Federal Executive Institute and Management Development Centers, as well as course offerings and a search guide for other information.

<http://www.leadership.opm.gov/ecq.cfm>

- This link will tell you about executive core qualifications and competencies.

<http://www.leadership.opm.gov/courselist.cfm>

- This link will give you a list of all courses offered, course descriptions and general information.

### **USDA GRADUATE SCHOOL:**

The graduate school offers a variety of courses, classroom and distance learning. Classroom courses are generally conducted in Washington, DC; however several courses are offered at sites around the Country as well. The general Graduate School link below offers options to find courses and programs offered by subject area and other criteria.

- Information about the Graduate School can be found at:

<http://grad.usda.gov/>

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## **COLLEGE COURSES:**

Colleges, Universities, and Community Colleges usually have web sites that include their college catalog. It is also useful to look for their adult education, off campus, or evening program link, since many continuing education courses are offered through those units.

## **BOOKS AND READINGS:**

Several books and readings are referenced. You should check your local library, local bookstores or college bookstores, [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) or the USDA National Agricultural Library at [www.nal.usda.gov/](http://www.nal.usda.gov/)

If you are having problems identifying or finding appropriate classes or books, please feel free to contact the AMS Training Institute. We will be happy to assist you.

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## INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN SUMMARY

### WHAT

*is an Individual Development Plan?*

An Individual Development Plan (IDP) is a written schedule or action plan of training and development activities or experiences designed to meet an employee's particular job and career goals. This written plan is developed to establish order, maintain focus, and track progress of the activities outlined for the intent of aiding an employee in accomplishing their goals.

### WHY

*is an IDP necessary?*

In passing the Government Employees Training Act of 1958, Congress stated its intent “to establish and maintain the highest standards of performance in the transaction of the public business, and to install and utilize effectively the best modern practices and techniques.” The law expected training “for the development of skills, knowledge, and abilities which will best qualify....for performance of official duties.” The objective was not just to enhance skills in doing the job the same old way, but to give employees new tools and insight which could lead to better ways of delivering services. Specifically, Congress expected training to “lead to (a) improved public service, (b) dollar savings, [and] (c) the building and retention of a permanent cadre of skilled and efficient Government employees, well abreast of scientific, professional, technical and management developments both in and out of Government.” [P.L. 85-507, 72 Stat. 327]

### WHO

*needs an IDP and who is responsible for its development?*

An IDP is no longer required of all permanent full-time USDA employees however, it remains a requirement for all permanent full-time AMS employees. It can be initiated by the employee or either the supervisor however, both should discuss the plan and reach agreement on the employee's developmental objectives and specific plans for accomplishing the objectives. While the supervisor and the employee have joint responsibility for developing and executing an employee's IDP, the responsibility of ensuring accomplishment of the activities or experiences that support the plan's objectives is the sole responsibility of the employee. Both parties come to the table bringing valuable information essential to the development of a sound IDP. The supervisor offers input based on familiarity with job standards, the employee's performance, and the Agency's organizational needs. The employee offers input based on familiarity with their own specific needs (i.e., strengths, limitations, and short and long-range goals).

## *How*

*does it work?*

The IDP serves as a communication vehicle between the employee, the supervisor, and the Agency. It formalizes the commitment of all parties involved and holds each party accountable for fulfilling their particular role in the development of the employee's career goals and objectives. The results of this effort reflect the employees' improved professional skills and the Agency's productivity.

## *When*

*should an IDP initially be developed and when should it be updated?*

IDP's should be developed at least once per year. Many supervisors include discussion of the employee's career goals and development plans with the employee as part of the annual performance evaluation process, although it does not have to be done at that time. As supervisors become aware of the organizational planning projections of the upcoming fiscal year, they are better able to anticipate and assess their staff's training and development needs.

The IDP is a document that is pliable, its entries are not etched in stone when initially prepared. The IDP should be reviewed periodically to ensure that the activities continue to be current and worthwhile in supporting the intended objectives and goals. In other words, are the supporting activities still needed and are they timely?

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## ADDITIONAL IDP QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### **1. Who has responsibility for initiating the request for approval of funding and/or use of official time to attend training?**

*It is the responsibility of the employee to request time and funding for various approved developmental assignments and training that involve official time or an expenditure of Government funds.*

### **2. How long is an IDP good for?**

*The targeted time frame is one year. However, the plan can be modified as necessary at any time during the year or at the next annual IDP discussion.*

### **3. What could warrant an IDP being modified at a time other than at the annual IDP discussion time?**

*Modifications can come about for various reasons, a couple of which would include (1) significant change(s) in an employee's present job or (2) change in organizational objectives.*

### **4. What happens to the IDP once all necessary adjustments have been made?**

*The plan is signed off on by the employee, the supervisor, and next level of supervision (if appropriate). Copies are then made and distributed to the employee and the supervisor. The employee should file their copy with other personal training documents and the supervisor should file their copy in the employee's Employee Performance File (EPF).*

### **5. If I'm satisfied with my current job and I'm not interested in moving into any other position (at least not in the immediate future), what can an IDP do for me?**

*Since the word "development" doesn't mean just moving up or into another job, the IDP can be focused on your "growth" in your current job — mastery of skills or learning facets of the job better. The IDP is useful to plan even more specific training and experiences such as special projects.*

### **6. I'm not interested in career development at this time. If I decide not to prepare an IDP this year, will I ever be able to take training again if I desire to do so later?**

*Certainly you can. One opportunity passed up does not mean you are barred from career development opportunities for ever. However, if you do decide not to take advantage of the opportunity to prepare an IDP, you should discuss your decision with your supervisor.*

### **7. I'll be retiring soon and I see no need to prepare an IDP. Do I have to prepare one?**

*No, you don't have to prepare an IDP but there are benefits to preparing one. Persons who are approaching or have already reached the stage of retirement, are in a prime position. No doubt you have contributed many years to your career and are now ready to leave the system however, there may be other colleagues who could benefit from your knowledge, skills and talents. Serving as a mentor or an advisor to other employees can be a rewarding experience and should be one of your considerations as an option to include on your career development plan.*



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